

Durham Research Online

Deposited in DRO:

08 January 2021

Version of attached file:

Published Version

Peer-review status of attached file:

Peer-reviewed

Citation for published item:

Chambers, Mark (2020) 'Players' in context: determining performance in medieval accountancy records.', *Early Theatre*, 23 (2).

Further information on publisher's website:

<https://doi.org/10.12745/et.23.2.4383>

Publisher's copyright statement:

(c) The Author. This article has been published in the journal 'Early Theatre' (<https://earlytheatre.org/earlytheatre/>) and will be available from <https://doi.org/10.12745/et.23.2.4383>.

Additional information:

Use policy

The full-text may be used and/or reproduced, and given to third parties in any format or medium, without prior permission or charge, for personal research or study, educational, or not-for-profit purposes provided that:

- a full bibliographic reference is made to the original source
- a [link](#) is made to the metadata record in DRO
- the full-text is not changed in any way

The full-text must not be sold in any format or medium without the formal permission of the copyright holders.

Please consult the [full DRO policy](#) for further details.

MARK CHAMBERS

‘Players’ in Context: Determining Performance in Medieval Accountancy Records

Arguably the largest source of REED material of their kind so far collected, the accounts of Durham’s medieval monastic community provide evidence for plays, music, and performers from around the palatinate, including payments to istriones, jocolatores, and ministralli performing for various occasions. With accountancy material, however, it can be difficult deciding if individual entries represent evidence of performers or performances per se, or what the nature of any performance might have been. This essay examines these issues in Durham’s accountancy records, looking particularly at Finchale Priory’s so-called ‘playerchambre’: instances in which evidence of ‘performance’ is uncertain and/or only determinable by wider consideration of context.

Since its foundation in the late 1970s, the Records of Early English Drama (REED) project has proven an invaluable resource for the study of premodern drama.¹ REED has become an essential reference for research into historic performance, drawing together evidence for not just ‘drama’ but also music, dance, communal ceremony, and folk custom. Central to the project’s design has been an attempt to identify that slippery, socially negotiated concept of ‘performance’. For the premodern records, such an approach obliges consideration of not only the various types of performance that entertained or ritualized premodern society, but also of how the extant record evidences aspects of performance. As a result, REED’s methods have evolved as the project has increased in sophistication. Some of the past criticism of REED took issue with the way in which particular types or sources of records tended to vary across the earlier print volumes.² Some of this variation resulted from considered and ongoing internal scrutiny of the project’s ‘Principles for Selection’, which have developed as work has progressed. Generally, the tendency has been towards wider inclusion and greater contextualization.³ But some variation is unavoidable. A degree of variability is inevitable in

Mark Chambers (mcchambers92@gmail.com) is a teaching fellow in the department of English studies at Durham University.

any large-scale historic survey such as REED: extant evidence is invariably scattered, often piecemeal, and rarely uniform.

A degree of variability is certainly true for the County Durham collection.⁴ In particular, Durham has a remarkable amount of surviving evidence from its extensive former monastic network. As with other collections, work on *REED: Durham* has produced a number of potential records whose veracity as evidence for REED can only be established through detailed analysis of their context. Such records include, for example, an intriguing case from the accounts of the tiny monastery at Finchale, just outside the city of Durham, where — as we shall see — a lack of corroborating detail problematizes what initially looks to be evidence for REED.

Using the case from Finchale as an introduction and drawing on further examples from Durham's extensive monastic accounts, this essay considers some of the particular challenges presented by accountancy records. It will further attempt to show that there is indeed a 'Durham difference' — a distinguishing feature of the Durham records' survival — which results in opportunities for the local collection and demonstrates the inevitable idiosyncrasy across the REED series as a whole.

Monastic Records: A Durham Difference?

One particularly conspicuous group of records that survive only piecemeal are those found in pre-Reformation ecclesiastical and monastic documents. In his introduction to the *REED: Coventry* volume, for example, R.W. Ingram laments: 'The Reformation left no more awesome sign of its power upon manuscripts than in the virtual obliteration of the ecclesiastical records of the churches and priories of Coventry'.⁵ In Coventry's case, this loss — this 'obliteration' — is especially regrettable given what we do know about the scope of the city's once popular Corpus Christi plays.⁶ As scarcely needs reiterating, records of performance generated by the 'old' religion of Britain and Ireland do not survive in great numbers. Fortunately in this case Durham is different. The powerful Benedictine priory at the heart of the former palatinate is blessed with copious extant records — not only from the priory's own archive but also from the extensive network of dependent cells connected to the mother house in the city of Durham. Medieval historian R.B. Dobson has suggested that 'no other English monastery has preserved a more comprehensive collection' — although there are contenders.⁷ Not only was Durham's medieval priory zealous in its record keeping, but it also made a relatively smooth transition to being a Protestant cathedral following the

Reformation.⁸ Like a handful of other former urban monasteries — such as Canterbury, Norwich, Westminster, and Worcester — the inheritors of Durham's post-Reformation estate were careful to preserve and maintain their important, long-running archive of financial and property documents.⁹ For the reformed Durham community, it seems, the transition was relatively smooth and the records particularly valuable.

The remarkable survival of Durham's accounts has proven an exceptional resource for social, economic, and religious historians; the accounts should be of greater interest to historians of premodern performance as well.¹⁰ To date we have extracted a large number of records of performance from over 250 years of the medieval priory's domestic accounts.¹¹ Collectively, they provide evidence for the monastery's continued support of a wide range of performers and performance types, without major interruption, from 1278 up to the community's suppression and dissolution in the 1530s. Certainly, the wealth of records from Durham's monastic accounts is exceptionally fulsome. However, records drawn from accounts present particular challenges for those interested in more than just historical accountancy or material culture — social historians, for example; anthropologists; theatre historians. These challenges are largely due to the dearth of context provided by any individual account entry.

For virtually all of the medieval period, Durham's well-established Benedictine community dominated much of the county and the wider episcopal palatinate. By the thirteenth century, the brethren of St Cuthbert controlled a network of nearly a dozen daughter houses along with numerous rectories, vicarages, and manors, both in the region and further afield.¹² Arguably, therefore, Durham's control was centralized to a much greater degree than other English monastic communities. Its Benedictine network proved quite effective at aggressively defending the mother house's spiritual and financial prerogatives in and around the palatinate.¹³ By the fourteenth century, Durham's network stretched as far north as the priory of Coldingham in Berwickshire, Scotland; to the north-west to Lytham in Lancashire; to the north-east to Holy Island and the Farne Islands; to the east to St Leonard's Priory in Stamford, Lincolnshire; and as far south as Durham College, Oxford (the bulk of which was supplanted by Trinity College after dissolution).¹⁴ All of Durham's dependent houses leave crucial evidence for performance, most frequently in the form of payments towards the city's annual boy bishop and 'Almonry bishop' ceremonies.¹⁵ Moreover, some of the most fascinating potential records from Durham come from the accounts of its wider demesne, including those of the dependent cells.

Finchale's 'playerchambre'

One cell in particular presents a case requiring further assessment in light of its unique nature and diffuse contextual evidence. The dependent priory at Finchale is situated just two miles downriver from Durham in a quiet bend in the River Wear. By the later medieval period, Finchale had become one of Durham Priory's wealthiest daughter houses — although it was never a large one.¹⁶ The accounts from Finchale for the financial year 1464–5 preserve an intriguing record of payment for building work going on in the priory's precinct, which looks suspiciously like potential evidence for inclusion in REED. Under the heading 'Expense' for the year, we find the following entry:

Et soluit Johanni Andrewson & socijs suis operantibus pro nova tectura unius Camere vocate le player Chambre ... xxiiij s.

And paid to John Andrewson and his fellow workers for a new roof for the room called 'the player chamber' ... 24 shillings.¹⁷

In the status accounts for the following year (ca 1465), there is record of additional improvements to this 'camera', involving the purchase of 'j bowyster j cervicall, Item in j por de ferro in camera prioris j in le plaercha ...' ('1 bolster [cushion], 1 cervical [neck pillow], also on 1 iron poker in the Prior's chamber, 1 in "the playercha ..."').¹⁸ Unfortunately, a lacuna obscures the ending of the word here. These two references have puzzled historians for decades. What exactly was a 'playerchamber' in the context of a late medieval monastery? And what was its role in the rural house of Finchale?

In his nineteenth-century transcription of the accounts for the Surtees Society, the Durham antiquarian James Raine stated that *le playerchambre* referred to:

[a] chamber in the Priory appropriated to dramatic representations, such as the Mysteries or Miracle plays of the age; and the room in which the Monks assembled to hear the minstrels and glee-men, who visited them for their amusement.¹⁹

This assertion would be fascinating if it were true: the idea of 'dramatic representations' and even 'Mysteries or Miracle plays' being performed in a dedicated chamber, in a remote medieval monastery, on an idyllic bend in the River Wear, would certainly be a turn-up for the books. Here, though, we require further context to establish the claim's veracity.

These sparse references to Finchale's 'playerchamber' provide a characteristic example of how a lack of detail and/or immediate, corroborating context can obscure certain sources of evidence, such as accounts. Indeed, the often thin records provided by accounts have featured in some past criticism of REED's methodology: scholars such as Theresa Coletti have complained about the 'decontextualizing of the evidence' in the early print volumes, some of which, she argues, 'fails to provide appropriate documentary evidence that would help make better sense of the copious data' gathered in the collections.²⁰ Others have defended the project's methods, yet still take issue with the apparent 'bald nature of the records calendared' such as those drawn from accounts, as well as the 'intellectual parochialism to the selection of many of the entries'.²¹ Along similar lines, Pamela King rightly argues that 'each record has its own context, manuscript, social, and cultural', and this context may be elided or curtailed, both by the nature of REED's selection and by its method of presentation.²² The chief targets of REED's approach in these assessments have been its principles for selection and the inevitable decontextualization of individual records. The accountancy records are the low-hanging fruit in this regard: they provide a great deal of evidence for REED, yet they are also some of the most elusive and decontextualized of any premodern written record.

Accounting for Context

Account records are some of the most numerous in many REED collections, yet they can be some of the most frustrating. Such records inevitably render most acute that 'decontextualizing' decried by Coletti and epitomize the 'bald nature of the records' characterized by Greg Walker. Conspicuous — and easily illustrated — examples are those records involving potential occupational names. Indeterminant 'surname' evidence can be particularly abstruse.

For example, the bursar's account for Durham Priory for the year 1298–99 includes record of payment made to a fellow named 'Roberto le Taburer'.²³ In this case, the French definite article *le* might suggest that Robert was indeed a tabor player, although this is by no means certain. For this 'Robert' entry, we have little further corroborating evidence. Moreover, the twenty shilling payment he is recorded as having been paid would be a lot for a single musician. Such indistinct entries can be problematic for REED editors, as they are for social and economic historians more generally. Along these lines, what does one do with entries recording payments to individuals with names such as 'Thomas Roter' in 1331–32 and 1347–48, 'William Rotour' in 1363, or the numerous 'Harpours' that appear

throughout the fourteenth-century accounts?²⁴ Are these entries recording payments to musicians — to rote players and harpists, respectively — or are they merely referencing surnames?²⁵ The ‘bald nature’ of such records requires further evidence.

For many such cases, further ‘recontextualizing’ may shed light. In another rudimentary example, the Thomas ‘Roter’ who appears in the priory bursar’s account for 1347–48 seems to have been a jobbing musician given the entry’s context, as he is paid alongside a group of *histriones*: ‘Istrionibus dominorum Willemi de la Pole & Iohannis de Streuelyn’ (to performers of William de la Pole and John of Stirling). These ‘players’ apparently performed around the feast of St James the Apostle on 25 July; they are all paid ‘de dono eiusdem’ (from the same gift) of the prior. Although this context does not definitively prove that Thomas was a performer, it does increase the likelihood that he took part in performance and may, indeed, have been a rote player.²⁶

Similarly, for 1371–73, we find an entry recording payment to ‘Roberto Trompour ad natale ex dono domini Prioris per predictum Iohannem, ij s.’ (Robert Trompour at Christmas, from the Prior by the aforesaid John [John de Beryngton, the previous bursar], 2 shillings).²⁷ In this case, ‘Trompour’ may be Robert’s surname, his occupation, or both. However, the same form of the word form has already been used for musicians in a previous run of these accounts:

Et duobus Trompours Comititis de Norhampton apud Wyuestow	iiij s.
Et Istrionibus in festo Translacionis Sancti Cuthberti	v s.
...	
Et cuidam Harpour vocato Rygeway	iiij s.iiij d.
(And to two ‘trumpeters’ of the Earl of Northampton at Westoe	4s
And to performers on the Feast of the Translation of Saint Cuthbert	5s
...	
And to a certain harper called Rygeway	3s 4d) ²⁸

Such usage of the term was frequent in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.²⁹ The entries here record that these ‘trompours’ or horn players of the earl of Northampton’s household were present at the prior’s manor at Westoe (now part of South Shields) in the summer of 1357. They feature in a list of payments to *histriones* at the feast of St Cuthbert’s Translation on 4 September alongside other named musicians, including the harpist called ‘Rygeway’. More definitive evidence for our Robert Trompour’s probable role as a musician appears in the account for

1369 — just two years before his appearance at Christmas cited above — when he apparently performed at the feast of St Cuthbert on 20 March: ‘Roberto Trompour & Willelmo Fergos Ministrallis in die Sancti Cuthberti, v.s.’.³⁰ Here, Robert is positively identified as *ministrallus* alongside one William Fergos, both apparently performing at the annual feast of the priory’s patron saint.

In accountancy records such as these, proof of performance is elusive and can only be tentatively deduced from examination of the wider context, including, for example, the place of, the occasion for, and the amount of payment. As these basic examples indicate (and has been discussed at length elsewhere), it can also help immensely to have evidence of the account’s wider run.³¹ This need for a wider frame of reference provides obvious opportunities for REED’s increasingly sophisticated digitized platform — for ‘eREED’, *REED Online*.³² The ability to draw together and cross-reference such material quickly and efficiently will help to restore some of the context compromised by the necessary process of extraction and curation.

Contextualizing Finchale

In the case of Finchale’s ‘playerchamber’, one requires further evidence of context than that provided by the surviving run of accounts. By themselves, the accounts provide too little information. We cannot — as James Raine did — simply presume dramatic performance based solely on what appears to be familiar terminology. So, what was the context for Finchale and its ‘playerchamber’?

The site was originally established as a hermitage for the Durham monk Goderic around 1112, a gift from Bishop Ranulf Flambard (1099–1128).³³ Following Goderic’s death and subsequent veneration, the site came to be inhabited by small groups of Durham monks and other monastics, until it was formally taken in hand by Durham Priory in 1196. By the mid-thirteenth century, and as a dependent cell, Finchale had grown large enough to house over a dozen Durham monks. However, the numbers declined over the following centuries, either as a result of the mid-fourteenth-century mortality or — like other houses in the region — due to the frequent wars between the English and the Scots. Regardless, the reduction in size of Finchale Priory seems to have been accompanied by a general change in use.

Other scholars have discussed at length Finchale’s basic history and architectural development.³⁴ During the fifteenth century the site seems to have evolved into a rather distinctive example of what has been referred to as a monastic *villegiatura*, or ‘holiday house’.³⁵ In other words, Finchale came to be used as one of

those places where a group of monks would withdraw for retreat and relaxation, temporarily free from the full rigours of the monastic rule of the mother house. In this regard, Finchale may be compared with, for example, the manor house of Corndean in the Cotswolds, Caldecote near Canterbury, Spalding Priory's grange at Wickham, the *seyney* house of Redburn attached to St Albans, or the manor at Badsey attached to Evesham Abbey.³⁶ The priors of Durham's own manor houses at Beaurepaire (now 'Bearpark') and Pitlington were used for similar purposes.³⁷ However, Finchale was a (little) priory in its own right, with its own (appointed) prior, officers, and infrastructure.

By the early fifteenth century, 'holidaying' at Finchale seems to have become codified: on 25 September 1408, Prior John de Hemingbrough (1391–1416) issued a set of ordinances stipulating that the small priory community would hereafter only include four regular, usually older or infirmed, brothers in residence with their prior.³⁸ Additionally, there would be a group of up to four visiting monks on rotation from Durham, each on furlough from the main house for a period of three weeks. The visiting monks would enjoy the tranquillity of the priory retreat before returning to Durham to be replaced by another group of four. Whilst the relative consistency of expenditure shown in Finchale's account rolls suggests that this arrangement stayed relatively stable during the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, we cannot be sure how strictly or for how long the 1408 ordinances were observed.³⁹ However, the immediate vicinity around Finchale certainly could have provided recreational activities, including opportunity 'ad spaciandum in campis' (to wander in the fields), as recommended by Prior John's ordinances, as well as for hunting and fishing. Indeed, existing records show the Finchale monks being reprimanded for keeping sporting dogs and attending hunts.⁴⁰

Overall, the fifteenth- and early-sixteenth-century accounts from Finchale suggest a life of ease and comfort, including a relatively healthy diet and comfortable accommodation. Note the description of bedding and other *accoutrement* purchased at the end of Uthred de Bolden's priorship (1360s–90s) from a 1397 *status* account:

In *primis* in camera in lectisternijs j lectus blodius nouus cum katyrcompase cum tapete. Item alius lectus cum tapete cum M et rosys. Item j lectus niger cum tapete. Item j lectus cum auibus viridibus cum tapete. Item j lectus cum M coronat'. Item j coopertorium cum rosys zalow sine tapete. Item aliud coopertorium cum auibus blodijs ex j. parte & zalow ex altera parte sine tapete. Item j lectus stewynd cum tapete. Item ij. paria lintheaminum noua. Item j. par antiquum. Item j par de strales antiquum. Item iiij paria lodicum Item ij. cannobia. Item j bankquer cum quinque

qwyssyns. Item in magna camera ij. longa bankquers et j breue de blodio cum vj. qwyssyns. Item j. por pro igne. Item ij. cathedrae. Item j. mensa Flandrensis.

First, in the chamber, in bedding, 1 new blue bed with Catherine wheels with bedspread/quilt. Also, another bed with bedspread with 'M' (Maria) and roses. Also, 1 black bed with bedspread. Also, 1 bed with green birds with bedspread. Also, 1 bed with crowned 'Marias'. Also, 1 coverlet with yellow roses with bedspread. Also, another coverlet with blue birds on one part and yellow on the other, without bedspread. Also, 1 'stained' (coloured) bed with bedspread. Also, 2 pairs of new bed-sheets. Also, 1 pair of old. Also, 1 pair of old blankets. Also, 4 pairs of bedclothes. Also, 2 canvas coverings. Also, 1 banker [bench cover] with five cushions. Also, in the Great Chamber, 2 long bankers and 1 short, of blue, with 6 cushions. Also, 1 poker for the fire. Also 2 seats. Also, 1 Flanders table.⁴¹

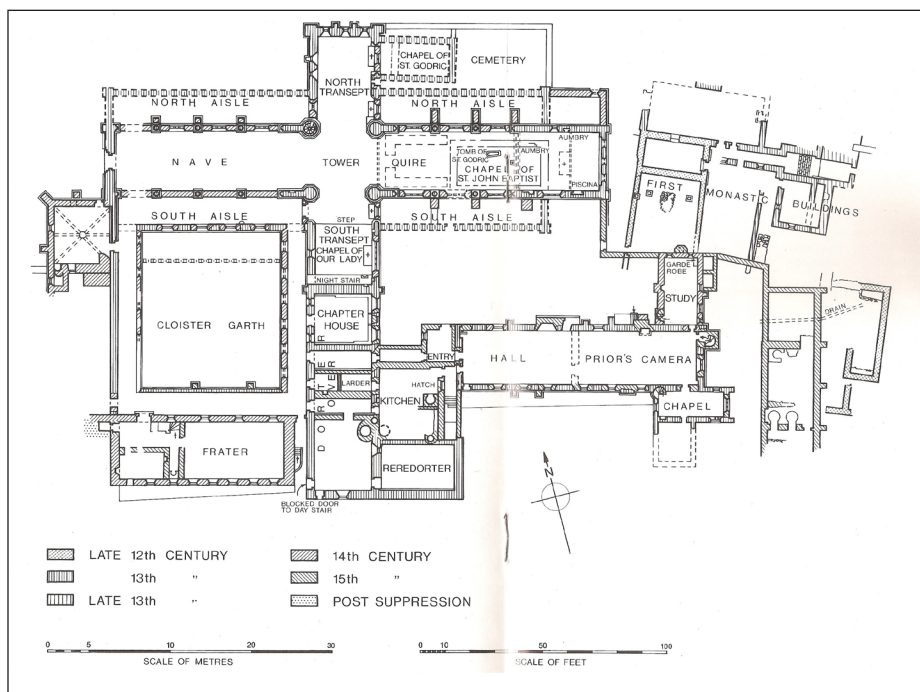


Figure 1. Plan of the Priory, 1933 © Crown copyright.

A more general survey of the fourteenth- and fifteenth-century accounts similarly suggests a house of relative luxury. The later medieval addition of a 'chamber' for entertainment or entertaining, whilst novel, is not altogether surprising.⁴²

The basic disposition of the range of buildings at Finchale is fairly standard for Benedictine monasteries of the later medieval period. During the 1360s, however, there seems to have been an initial phase of reducing the size of the church and renovation of the prior's lodgings, making the prior's hall more of the focal point of the community.⁴³ There was (and still is, in ruins) a cloister and precinct to the west, the eastward-ordinated church to the north, and a range of substantial late medieval prior's apartments to the east. According to architectural historians, the so-called 'playerchamber' mentioned in the accounts may have been located on the upper floor of part of the fifteenth-century prior's lodgings.⁴⁴ On phased plans of the site, these can be seen to the south-east of the wider range.⁴⁵ Although now completely ruinous, this space — roughly 4 x 5 metres — could hardly have been large enough for the production of the full-scale 'mysteries' or 'miracle plays' suggested by Raine. Here, the archaeological record disagrees with such an interpretation.

Moreover, with less than ten resident monks at any one time and in a relatively remote location, it seems unlikely that Finchale supported any regular 'mysteries' or 'miracle plays', and even more unlikely that they would have a dedicated room or 'chambre' in which productions were mounted. In fact, surviving documentary evidence provides no hint of play 'productions' at Finchale at all. The accounts record a few, small-scale payments made to 'ministralis et aliis'.⁴⁶ Yet these are consistent with payments made by other religious houses throughout the country that were often made as charity and may relate to payments for performers in Durham or elsewhere in the community.⁴⁷

While Raine's original assertion is virtually unsupportable, it was rendered gospel for generations of scholars after being supported by E.K. Chambers in his enduringly influential study of *The Mediaeval Stage*.⁴⁸ Chambers's assessment of the 'pleasure loving monks' of Finchale with their special chamber for dramatic 'entertainments' has continued to find its way into modern scholarship. Glynne Wickham, for example, in his monumental study of *Early English Stages, 1300–1660*, identifies this reference to a space for drama production.⁴⁹ More recently, no less a careful scholar than Katie Normington has also repeated the notion, although she is cautiously unspecific.⁵⁰

Our examination of the wider context of these records, however, indicates that we cannot assume any dramatic 'performance' per se in Finchale's infamous 'playerchamber'. In fact, the two references in the accounts most likely point to a

Middle English loan translation: forms of Latin *ludus* and *ludere* appear elsewhere and frequently in the Durham Priory accounts where they have a non-‘dramatic’ meaning; *ludentibus* (as a substantive) or *sociis ludentibus*, referring to ‘monks on holiday’ or ‘monks on retreat’.⁵¹ The telltale French article *le* in the account simply indicates a switch to the vernacular, followed by the locally coined Middle English compound.⁵² ‘Le playerchambre’, then, almost certainly refers to the space in the priory, likely in the prior’s complex, where the retiring monks would spend time in recreation and dining. This is the nature of Finchale’s ‘holidaying chamber’: a comfortable space away from the quotidian strictures of the monastic rule. It is even possible that visiting *ministralli* may have performed in the space on occasion, although such an assertion must remain speculative.

The useful input of the archaeological evidence for this potential record also emphasizes the value of a multidisciplinary approach to the study of early drama and performance. As Carol Symes has astutely summarized:

[T]he study of medieval theatre, broadly conceived, contributes materially to the study of medieval societies, especially the histories of communication, cross-cultural conflict and exchange, politics, popular piety, space, embodiment, the senses, agency, identity, memory, emotion — the list goes on: however limited their manuscript witnesses might be, the components of medieval theatre are the closest things we have to mass media.⁵³

Clearly the records are merely a part — if a crucial one — in the wider study of early performance culture, a field which requires interdisciplinary communication and cooperation. As Walker long ago noted, historians of drama should ‘seek to locate the questions that they ask and the issues which they address within the wider debates of historical studies generally’.⁵⁴ Hopefully, in future a targeted, interdisciplinary approach to such ‘recreational’ spaces in medieval monasteries, such as Finchale’s ‘playerchambre’, could pull together archaeological or topographical evidence with the surviving documents for similar sites across the country.

This example from Finchale also demonstrates that context is crucial to a nuanced understanding of many potential records of performance — especially those arising from sparse sources such as accounts, with the frequently ‘bald nature’ of the records they yield. REED’s new and evolving digital platform will help facilitate robust tagging and searching as has hitherto not been available. It should create immense opportunities for future framing and presenting of REED’s evidence. It may also suggest further collaborative or multidisciplinary

approaches which may help ameliorate REED's certain but often elusive wider relevance. As REED evolves, it can continue to seek out lost 'performance' whilst finding ways to account for lost context.

Notes

- 1 For REED's inception, see Ian Lancashire, 'Medieval Drama', in *Editing Medieval Texts*, ed. A.G. Rigg (New York, 1977), 76–7; and Alexandra Johnston, 'The Founding of Records of Early English Drama', in *REED in Review: Essays in Celebration of the First Twenty-Five Years*, ed. Audrey Douglas and Sally-Beth MacLean (Toronto, 2006), 21–38.
- 2 See for example Pamela King, 'Records of Early English Drama: Reflections of a Hardened User', *Medieval English Theatre* 17 (1995), 54.
- 3 See Sally-Beth MacLean, 'REED: A Retrospective', *Renaissance and Reformation / Renaissance et Réforme* 37.4 (2014), 235–51. For REED's 'Principles for Selection', see Alexandra Johnston, ed., *REED: York*, 2 vols (Toronto, 1979), 1.xv, and Alexandra Johnston and Sally-Beth MacLean, *REED: Handbook for Editors* (1990), 11–16, <https://reed.utoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Handbook.pdf>.
- 4 The *REED: Durham* collection is being jointly edited by myself and John McKinnell. The first tranche of records should appear on *REED Online* from 2021 (<https://ereed.library.utoronto.ca>). For more information, see the *REED North-East* website at <http://community.dur.ac.uk/reed.ne/>.
- 5 William Ingram, ed., *REED: Coventry* (Toronto and Buffalo, 1981), lii.
- 6 Ibid, xv–xix. See the introduction by Pamela M. King and Clifford Davidson to *The Coventry Corpus Christi Plays*, ed. King and Davidson (Kalamazoo, 2000), 1–82.
- 7 R.B. Dobson, *Durham Priory, 1400–1450* (Cambridge, 1973), 5; see also Alisdair John Dobbe, 'Account Management and Control at Durham Cathedral Priory, c. 1250 — c. 1420', PhD thesis (Durham University, 2011), 96–104.
- 8 *The Victoria History of the County of Durham*, ed. William Page and Gillian Cookson, 5 vols (London and Woodbridge, 1905–), 2.101.
- 9 Dobbe, 'Account Management', 96–7.
- 10 E.K. Chambers provides a very short extract in *The Mediaeval Stage*, 2 vols (Oxford, 1903), 2.240–4.
- 11 Most substantially in the Priory bursars' accounts (Durham University Library [DUL] DCD-Burs. acs). Evidence also survives from other obedientiary accounts, including the Almoners', Cellarers', Chamberlains', Communars', Feretrars', Hostillers', Infirmaryers', Sacrists', Treasurers', and Priors' Expenses (all DUL DCD-). See

- Mark Chambers, 'An Exotic Monster, a French Magician, and Scottish *Ministralli*: Visiting Players in the Durham Records', in *Early Performers and Performance in the North-East of England: Continuity and Difference*, ed. John McKinnell and Diana Wyatt (Amsterdam, forthcoming).
- 12 Dobson, *Durham Priory*, 9–10; L.A.S. Butler, 'Medieval Urban Religious Houses', in *Urban Archaeology in Britain*, ed. J.R. Schofield and R. Leech (London, 1987), 169.
 - 13 See Dobson, *Durham Priory*, 11–50.
 - 14 Other dependent cells included Jarrow, Monk Wearmouth, and Finchale (discussed below); Dobson, *Durham Priory*, 297–341.
 - 15 John McKinnell and Mark Chambers, 'Tradition Adapted: Boy Bishops in Medieval Durham', in McKinnell and Wyatt, eds, *Early Performers and Performance*; for general background, see Chambers, *The Mediaeval Stage*, 1.336–71; Clifford Davidson, *Festivals and Plays in Late Medieval Britain* (Aldershot and Burlington, 2007), 4–10.
 - 16 *Victoria History of the County of Durham*, 2.103–4; Peter Ryder, *Finchale Priory, County Durham* (London, 2000), 19–20.
 - 17 DUL MS DCD-Finc. acs 1464–5, my trans.; extracted in James Raine, ed., *The Priory of Finchale: The Charters of Endowment, Inventories, and Account Rolls* [...], Surtees Society 6 (London, 1837), ccxcv.
 - 18 DCD-Finc. acs 1465, *status*; Raine, *Priory of Finchale*, ccxcviii. For 'bowyster' and 'cervicall', see 'cervical', *Medieval Cloth and Clothing Lexis*, <http://lexisearch.arts.manchester.ac.uk/entry.aspx?id=934>; and 'bolster', <http://lexisearch.arts.manchester.ac.uk/entry.aspx?id=506>.
 - 19 Raine, *Priory of Finchale*, ccccxli.
 - 20 Theresa Coletti, 'Reading REED: History and the Records of Early English Drama', in *Literary Practice and Social Change in Britain, 1380–1530*, ed. Lee Patterson (Berkeley, 1990), 270–1 and 277; see also her 'Fragmentation and Redemption: Dramatic Records, History, and the Dream of Wholeness', *Envoi* 3 (1991), 1–13.
 - 21 Greg Walker, 'A Broken REED?: Early Drama Records, Politics, and the Old Historicism', *Medieval English Theatre* 17 (1995), 44–5.
 - 22 King, 'Reflections', 54. For a recent assessment see MacLean, 'REED: A Retrospective'.
 - 23 DCD-Burs. acs 1298–9, mb 4 (*dona prioris*).
 - 24 For examples DCD-Burs. acs 1363–4, mb 5d; 1368–9, mb 7; and 1370–71, mb 6.
 - 25 For further analysis, see Chambers, 'Visiting Players'.
 - 26 A rote was a stringed instrument in the lyre/psaltery family; see *Grove Music Online*, s.v. 'Psaltery' and *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, s.v. 'rote, n.2'.
 - 27 DCD-Burs. acs 1371–3, mb 4.

- 28 DCD-Burs. acs 1357–8, mb 6, my emphasis.
- 29 See *Middle English Dictionary*, ed. Sherman Kuhn, Hans Kurath, and Robert E. Lewis (Ann Arbor, MI, 1952–2001), s.v. ‘trumpour, *n*’; online edition in *Middle English Compendium*, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary>.
- 30 DCD-Burs. acs 1368–9, mb 7.
- 31 A point made both by Walker, ‘A Broken REED?’, 45; and by King, ‘Reflections’, 55.
- 32 REED Online, <https://ereed.library.utoronto.ca>; MacLean, ‘REED: A Retrospective’, 248–51.
- 33 *Victoria History of the County of Durham*, 2.103–4; Ryder, *Finchale Priory*, 14–23; the following is derived from these sources.
- 34 See for example *Victoria History of the County of Durham*, 2.103–4; C.R. Peers, ‘Finchale Priory’, *Archaeologia Aeliana*, 4th ser., 4 (1927), 193–220; Nikolaus Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: County Durham*, 2nd edn, rev Elizabeth Williamson (Harmondsworth, 1983), 30, 274–5; Raine, *Priory of Finchale*, xviii–xxi; Ryder, *Finchale Priory*, 3–23.
- 35 Dobson, *Durham Priory*, 97 n 4; Michael Ashton, *Monasteries in the Landscape* (Stroud, 2012), 159.
- 36 Ashton, *Monasteries*, 159; Dobson, *Durham Priory*, 310.
- 37 Dobson, *Durham Priory*, 97–8.
- 38 DUL Durham Cathedral Archive Reg. Parv. II, ff 8v–9v; printed in Raine, *Priory of Finchale*, 30–1; see also Dobson, *Durham Priory*, 310.
- 39 Dobson, *Durham Priory*, 310–11.
- 40 London, British Library MS Cotton Faustina A. VI, f 8; Ryder, *Finchale Priory*, 21; Raine, *Priory of Finchale*, xxiv.
- 41 DCD-Finc. acs 1397, *status*. For the cloth and fabric terms, see *Medieval Cloth and Clothing Lexis*.
- 42 Plan in Charles Reed Peers, *Finchale Priory* (London, 1987), 8–9.
- 43 Ryder, *Finchale Priory*, 21.
- 44 See discussion by Eric Cambridge, ‘The Masons and Building Works of Durham Priory, 1339–1539’, PhD thesis (Durham University, 1992).
- 45 Plans of the site appear in Raine, *Priory of Finchale*, plate on xviii–xix; Peers, *Finchale Priory*, 8–9; Ryder, *Finchale Priory*, 24–5.
- 46 For example DCD-Finc. ac. 1385, 1398–9, 1407–8.
- 47 Suggested by John McKinnell, personal communication.
- 48 Chambers, *The Mediaeval Stage*, 1.188–9.
- 49 Glynne Wickham, *Early English Stages, 1300–1660*, 2nd edn (London, 2002), 2.38.

- 50 Katie Normington, *Medieval English Drama: Performance and Spectatorship* (Cambridge, 2009), 30.
- 51 *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources*, ed. R.E. Latham et al. (Oxford, 1975–2012), s.v. ‘ludere, -are’, ‘ludus’.
- 52 See also Laura Wright, ‘A Pilot Study on the Singular Definite Articles *le* and *la* in Fifteenth-Century London Mixed-Language Business Writing’, in *The Anglo-Norman Language and its Contexts*, ed. Richard Ingham (York, 2010), 130–42.
- 53 Carol Symes, ‘The History of Medieval Theatre / Theatre of Medieval History’, *History Compass* 7 (2009), 6.
- 54 Walker, ‘A Broken REED?’, 49.

